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Editorial

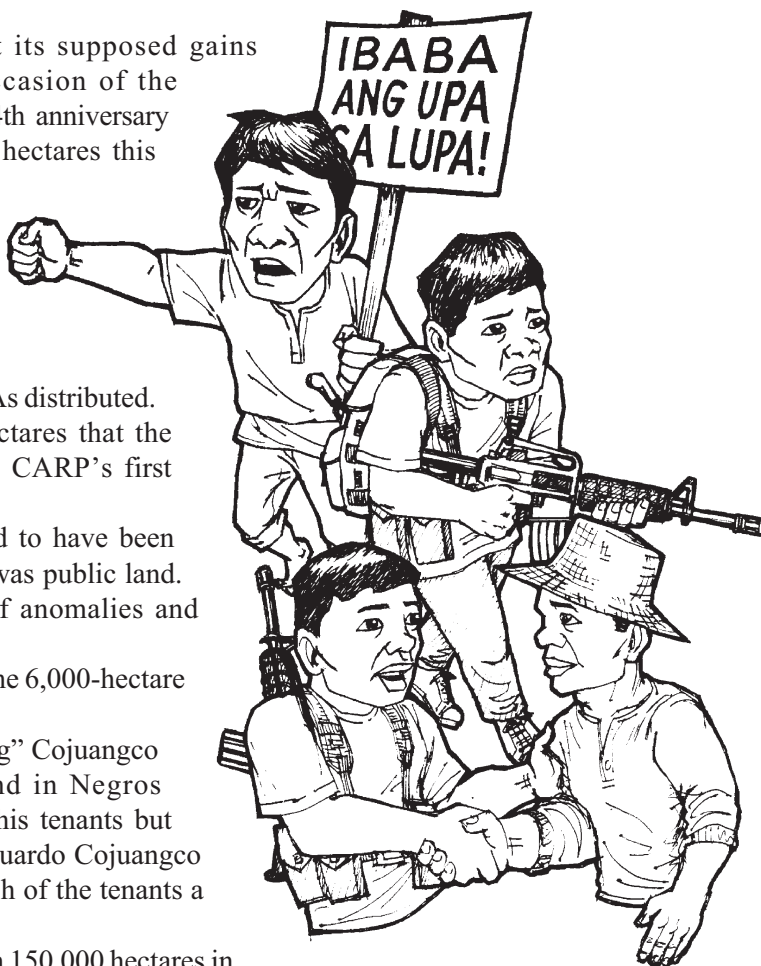
Genuine agrarian reform's only hope lies in revolutionary struggle

The Macapagal-Arroyo regime bragged about its supposed gains in implementing agrarian reform, on the occasion of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program's (CARP) 14th anniversary on June 10. It claimed to have exceeded by 4,261 hectares this year's target distribution of 100,000 hectares of agricultural land set by Macapagal-Arroyo in her State of the Nation Address in 2001. It likewise claimed to have distributed the most number of Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) in a year in the entire history of CARP.

In truth, this is actually the lowest number of CLOAs distributed. Prior to this, the lowest figure was the 111,665 hectares that the Aquino regime claimed to have distributed during CARP's first year.

Neither were all of the lands that were supposed to have been distributed private lands: some 35,000 hectares of it was public land. Worse, such distribution was attended by a host of anomalies and deception. Among them are the;

- *Stock Distribution Option* (as what was done in the 6,000-hectare Hacienda Luisita);
- *Corporate Scheme* (as what Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco did with more than 4,361 hectares of his land in Negros Occidental, which he supposedly distributed to his tenants but which were in fact immediately taken over by Eduardo Cojuangco and Sons Incorporated in exchange for giving each of the tenants a handful of the corporation's shares);
- *Cooperative Scheme* (as what Cojuangco did with 150,000 hectares in Isabela, where farmers were made to join VapDeCo, a bogus cooperative set up by the province's warlord-governor Faustino Dy Jr. The farmers were also forcibly bound by an exclusive contract to plant cassava for Danding Cojuangco's San Miguel Corporation); and
- *Voluntary Land Transfer/Direct Payment Scheme* or VLT/DPS (which is currently being vigorously pushed by the Macapagal-Arroyo regime).



The first three are all forms of alleged joint ventures between landlords and peasants. They are schemes through which big landlord-compradors are able to retain ownership and control over lands they are supposed to have distributed to farmers. In exchange, they give the farmers a few shares of the corporations or bogus cooperatives that are likewise controlled by the landlord-compradors.

The VLT/DPS, which is now considered by the Macapagal-Arroyo regime as its strategy in the claimed implementation of CARP, is used as an instrument by landlords to transfer their lands to chosen “beneficiaries”, often their children or relatives. The regime also uses this to bloat the number of persons supposedly given land under CARP. *(See related article)*

Aside from this, landlords resort to so many other means long familiar to them to disregard, evade or reverse CARP’s implementation. From the beginning, CARP has purposely made room for many methods and loopholes to prevent the coverage of landlords’ vast landholdings. In reality, CARP contains nothing but loopholes and embellishments, and its implementation has been replete with anomalies.

Among them are;

- Land-use conversion or crop conversion in lands that are supposed to be covered by CARP, where landlords shift to export crops not covered by CARP or to industrial, commercial, residential and tourism projects.
- Exemption from CARP coverage of commercial and corporate farms such as orchards, fishponds, prawn farms, poultry farms, piggeries and cattle ranches;
- Enforcement of leasehold contracts between landlords and peasants;
- Overpricing of lands.

CARP is no different from the various sham land reform schemes of the past: from Quezon’s vacuous “social justice” to Magsaysay’s decorative Land Reform Act (1955), Diosdado Macapagal’s bogus Agricultural Land Reform Code (1963) and Marcos’ Presidential Decree 27 (1972). They all had the main objective of deceiving the farmers through illusory land distribution schemes, suppressing their resistance and keeping them shackled by feudal and semifeudal rule. None of them aimed to end landlord monopoly over vast tracts of land and distribute the latter for free to the farmers. If there ever was any land distributed, it was at very high amortization rates, far beyond what poor and middle peasants could afford.

In the past three decades, the peasantry’s problem of having none or too little land to till has rapidly worsened. The bogus land reform programs of past and current regimes have not resolved the peasantry’s land problem; they have instead worsened it.

As of now, seven out of 10 farmers do not have land of their own to till. Agricultural lands remain highly concentrated in the hands of big landlords, the comprador bourgeoisie and foreign agro-corporations. It is estimated that almost 20% of agricultural land in the country is owned by 9,500 big landlords, most of them comprador bourgeoisie as well. This is aside from even bigger landholdings effectively controlled by the big comprador bourgeoisie. Whether or not they directly own agricultural land, they are actually landlords of a new type.

All of this proves that only agrarian revolution and armed revolution can solve the farmers’ main problem of landlessness. The peasants who fight for land to till and to smash the old feudal and semifeudal system in the countryside and the rest of the country—they who join and support the New People’s Army and strongly uphold people’s war—are the main force for attaining genuine people’s democracy and national liberation. **AB**



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Replete with anomalies

ONE OF THE LANDLORDS' DESIGNS TO EVADE THE implementation of land reform is the Voluntary Land Transfer/Direct Payment Scheme (VLT/DPS). It has been the most often-used means to supposedly implement the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), especially since 1996. The VLT/DPS was likewise approved by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) under the Macapagal-Arroyo regime as a strategy for CARP's implementation.

Under the VLT/DPS, landlords choose favored "beneficiaries" who will directly "compensate" them. DAR's only role is to provide certificates and other official documents, conduct surveys and receive transfer taxes.

Even the investigation conducted by the Audit Management and Investigation Committee of the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (AMIC-PARC) proves that VLT/DPS is now the scheme of choice of landlords to evade CARP. In some areas, like Pangasinan, up to 95% of supposed CARP implementation is

effected through this scheme.

Some of the usual forms of corruption related to VLT/DPS that have been exposed include the following:

Many of those chosen as "beneficiaries" are unqualified, including the landlords' underage children, other relatives or dummies. According to AMIC-PARC, "some reported instances of land distribution are means of passing on inheritance."

In Agno, Pangasinan, 95% of those reported by the Municipal Agrarian Reform Office as land reform "beneficiaries" came to be so through VLT/DPS and most of them were relatives or persons in the employ of, and chosen by, the landlords.

In many cases, the landlords connived in listing the names of "beneficiaries" even without the latter's knowledge. In several of the cases investigated, the "beneficiaries" were neither farmers nor persons who had the intention to farm; they likewise did

not know where the lands were located. In Iligan City, for example, it was discovered that 26 "beneficiaries" of VLT/DPS were not farmers. Among them were a pharmacy manager, a printing press manager, nine students and two long-time residents of the US. In Esperanza, Agusan del Sur, six VLT/DPS "beneficiaries" were found to be neither farmers nor residents of the area: two were in Manila, two were in Bohol, two were in Sarangani and another has been working abroad for two years. **AB**



Landholdings of selected landlords (2000)

Hacienda/Landlord	Landholdings (Hectarage)	Area
Danding Cojuangco	19,000	Isabela, Negros, Pangasinan, Mindoro
Hacienda de los Santos	9,700	Nueva Ecija
Hacienda San Antonio and Sta. Isabel	8,000	Isabela
Hacienda Roxas	8,500	Batangas
Hacienda Yulo	7,100	Laguna
Tinio family	7,000	Nueva Ecija
Hacienda Luisita	6,000	Tarlac
Floirendo family	4,500	Mindanao

More than 11,000 farmers benefit from agrarian revolution in Northeast Mindanao

Agrarian revolution benefited up to 11,343 farmers from April 2001 to April 2002 in various guerrilla zones in the Northeastern Mindanao region. By waging continuous struggles, the peasants were able to raise the wages of farm workers and farm gate prices for their produce, reduce land rent and usury and assert their right to till. According to *Lingkawas*, the revolutionary mass paper in the region, 23 campaigns of various types and various durations were launched in more than 60 barrios in a span of one year.

Following are some of the actions successfully waged by the mass organizations:

- The daily wage for all types of farm work was raised from P70 to P80 per day, with breakfast and lunch provided for free, in Las Nieves, Agusan del Norte. More than 200 families benefited. Five nearby barrios were also influenced by the struggle. Wages were likewise raised in San Agustin and Tandag in Surigao del Sur and Butuan City in Agusan del Norte.
- Calamansi fruit pickers gained a wage hike, from P30 to P40 per netbag, in Bayugan and Sibagat, both in Agusan del Sur.
- The price of *lakatan* was raised from P2.50 to P5.00 per kilo; and *latundan* from P2.00 to P4.50 per kilo, in two barrios of Lianga, Surigao del Sur. Carrying *morado*, a type of banana that used to have no commercial value, is now worth P5.00 per *bundak*

(equivalent to one to two small bunches of banana).

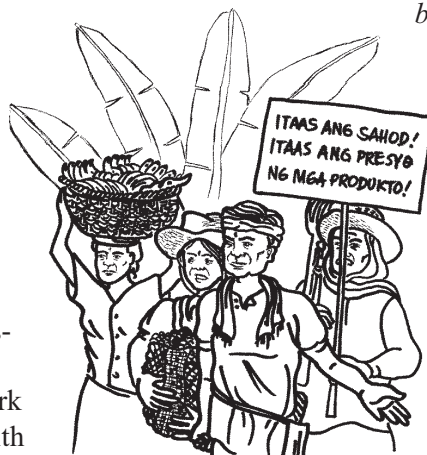
In Agusan del Norte, four merchants refused to raise *latundan* prices to P9-9.50 per *bundak*. But when they saw that the farmers were ready to sell their produce to other merchants and to strengthen their cooperative, the merchants were forced to buy the bananas at the price set by the farmers.

- Villagers in five barrios of Bayugan prevented their lands from being seized and used as a palm tree plantation.

- In Agusan del Norte, there are initial gains in changing the system of land rent in favor of the tenants.

- A legal struggle was waged in five towns in Surigao del Sur to raise the price of abaca. Vice Gov. Lib Navarro thwarted the move. Despite this, the abaca farmers, like the peasants in Agusan del Norte, looked for alternative buyers along with strengthening their cooperative.

To improve production and the people's livelihood, various forms of cooperation among the masses continue to be developed. From time to time, the "balik-sakahan" (return to the farm) campaign is advanced in areas where peasants were displaced by hamletting and AFP military operations in the 1980s and 1990s. **AB**



Successful anti-usury campaign launched in Cagayan

Peasants in Baggao, Cagayan have harvested a bundle of gains from launching mass actions against landlords and usurers. Up to 2,400 families in 12 barangays in Baggao benefited from this mass campaign.

Usurers and merchants were compelled to sign an agreement signifying their formal assent to the peasants'

demands to reduce interest rates on loans and abolish other forms of exploitation in the sale of the farmers' produce. The confrontation was held at the barangay hall in Centro Baggao on April 8. It was the peak of an eight-month mass campaign and was led by CAGIMUNGAN, the inter-municipal peasant association in Cagayan province.

The peasants were able to reduce interest from 50-60 kilos of corn or palay for every P1,000 loan to 25 kilos. Although the agreement would take effect during the next harvest in 2002, interest was already reduced by 10 kilos for the current harvest.

The peasants were likewise no longer obliged to sell their produce to their creditors. They could now sell their products to other merchants willing to offer them a higher price.

The agreement also called for a stop to the imposition of interest on loans for fertilizer. From now on, fertilizer would be available on credit at the prevailing market price.

No interest will be charged during calamities. Those who are unable to pay their debts will no longer be arrested, and the practice of seizing their carabaos and lands will also be stopped.

The merchants' weighing scales will be regularly inspected to ensure their fairness. The selling price of corn and palay will also be monitored at the merchants' trading stations and used as the basis for setting the buying price for the farmers' produce.

Simultaneous with the confrontation between the peasant-leaders and usurer-traders, more than 600 farmers rallied, holding aloft placards stating their demands. The confrontation was likewise witnessed by town and barangay officials and church people.

Meanwhile, in Baggao and other parts of eastern Cagayan, the peasants' struggle to reduce and eventually eliminate land rent so they could own the farms they had long been renting is advancing, along with the struggle to reduce irrigation fees and raise the prices of their produce. Simultaneously, the practice of forming mutual aid teams among peasants to improve production and health is likewise advancing.

The mass campaigns have also resulted in the expansion and consolidation of CAGIMUNGAN and the development of relations with the middle forces. Above all, they have been a source of a bountiful harvest of golden lessons in strengthening the unity and advancing the interests of the people. **AB**

Conditions of farm workers in Hacienda Luisita

Rich soil for revolution

"The only solution to the problems faced by the farm workers of Hacienda Luisita is agrarian revolution within the framework of the national-democratic struggle."

—Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid

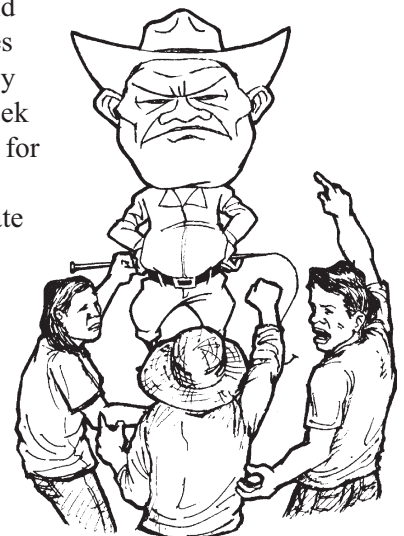
Farm workers have been waging continuous mass actions since May 20 against new policies imposed on them by Hacienda Luisita Inc. (HLI). Thousands of peasants from 10 barrios covered by the hacienda have joined such actions. Violent confrontations have erupted due to provocations from a composite force of military, police and CAFGU elements and hacienda guards who have jointly been brutalizing the workers.

The 6,000-hectare Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac is owned by Peping Cojuangco and former president Corazon Aquino's clan. Since the Aquino regime, succeeding regimes have all touted the hacienda as a showcase of the government's supposed gains in agrarian reform. The hacienda's 5,228 farm workers have all been used as pawns in various schemes hatched by various governments to circumvent agrarian reform. In the latter part of the 1980s, the hacienda began implementing the land-distribution scheme, which quickly gave way to the stock-distribution scheme. The state tagged each of these schemes a "success" and a "model" in implementing agrarian reform. But for the hacienda's farm workers, each scheme imposed on them meant added suffering and exploitation.

On May 13, the HLI imposed new labor policies that have led the farm workers to wage collective action. Due to a new rotation scheme, each farm worker is now entitled to work for only three hours a week or for two to three days a month and will receive a P73 weekly wage or P291.75 a month. Overtime is now prohibited and farm workers will not be given work during the rainy season. This violates the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) entered into by the union and HLI management. The CBA guarantees that each worker shall be employed by the hacienda six or seven days a week and receive a daily wage of P194.50 for an eight-hour working day.

The new policies likewise stipulate that HLI shall take in 144 farm workers weekly from each barangay. This violates the CBA's terms stating that 523 persons should be taken in daily from each barangay.

The daily living standard for a



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Guingona booted out of DFA for opposing Balikatan

Conflicts between Macapagal-Arroyo and Vice-President Teofisto Guingona Jr. once more came to the fore when Guingona announced on July 2 that he was finally resigning as secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) effective July 15. Guingona did not deny that he was being made to resign because of his continued opposition to the Macapagal-Arroyo regime's policies that advocate US military intervention and violate Philippine sovereignty, including Balikatan and the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA).

Prior to this, Guingona was already against distorting the provisions of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) to rationalize the long-term presence of American troops in the country. He also opposed a provision in the trilateral "anti-terrorist agreement" among the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia on May 7 because it broadly defined "terrorism" to include "threats to the stability, territorial integrity, political unity and sovereignty of independent states". Guingona said that this encompassed even revolutionary groups and would obstruct the peace talks with them. He asked how peace talks could be pursued if the other party were considered "terrorist". Macapagal-Arroyo, however, insisted on approving the accord and ordered DILG Sec. Jose Lina to sign it because Guingona refused to do so.

Guingona's conflicts with Macapagal-Arroyo deepened when he likewise opposed the MLSA. The

latter allows the US to set up facilities in the Philippines to store weapons and other military equipment and supplies. The MLSA was secretly signed by Macapagal-Arroyo and US Pres. George Bush last year; they now plan to formalize the agreement.

Sen. Blas Ople has accepted Macapagal-Arroyo's offer for him to replace Guingona at the DFA.

Ople and Macapagal-Arroyo have a history of collaboration in pushing pro-imperialist "globalization". When they were both senators, they co-authored the law approving the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade that resulted in the Philippines' membership in the World Trade Organization and the country's subjection to its policies that favor foreign interests. Although Ople was the main author, it was Macapagal-Arroyo who took over and led in pushing GATT when Ople fell ill. In turn, Macapagal-Arroyo avidly supported Ople in his proposed ratification of the VFA.

Macapagal-Arroyo's other objective in giving the DFA portfolio to Ople, a member of the opposition, is to deprive the opposition of a crucial vote in the Senate. Ople has pretensions of not being an opportunist and has said that he would be voting with the opposition when the Senate resumes its sessions. But immediately afterwards, he would be transferring to the DFA and the Macapagal-Arroyo camp would resume control of the majority in the senate. **AB**

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family of six outside Metro Manila is P396.00 or P12,000 per month. This means that HLI intends to starve the farm workers and their families to death with its proposed monthly wage of P291.75 (or an average of less than P10.00 per day). Worse, the farm workers will also be deprived of income during the rainy season.

To complete his exploitative scheme, Peping Cojuangco uses the military and police to brutalize the farm workers. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, congressman for the second district of Tarlac and former president Aquino's son, has pushed the formation of squads of civilian security forces under the CAFGU. Cojuangco also uses the 69th IB as a private army to protect the hacienda against the people waging protests. HLI likewise connives with the courts in threatening to file criminal cases against 14 farm workers

in relation to the violence that erupted in the first half of June. The United Luisita Workers' Union, a yellow union led by Francisco "Boy" Sigua, is being used by HLI to betray the workers' resistance.

The struggle of Hacienda Luisita's farm workers led by the Alyansa ng mga Manggagawang Bukid sa Asyenda Luisita (AMBALA) has gained the people's support. The Central Azucarera de Tarlac Labor Union, the biggest organized workers' group in Tarlac, and the Alyansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Tarlac, a provincial affiliate of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, have both expressed their support.

The hacienda workers' severely exploitative and oppressive conditions and the employment of instruments of violence to deprive them of their rights have pushed them to go all-out in advancing their struggle. **AB**



**Agreement on
unlimited military
cooperation
approved**

Macapagal-Arroyo announced on July 1 that the Mutual Defense Board (MDB) had approved a long-term program for "military cooperation" between the Philippines and the US. The MDB's five-year program adopted during its meeting in Hawaii on June 25 calls for the transformation of the ongoing Balikatan 02-1 into a "sustained program of security cooperation and counter-terrorism training and assistance".

This not only paves the way for the permanent presence of American troops in the country in the form of long and successive "Balikatan" exercises. The operations related to these "training exercises" will even cover the entire country. This includes AFP chief Gen. Roy Cimatu's announcement that troops participating in Balikatan 02-1 which officially terminates on July 31, would be organized into small teams and deployed to various areas in Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao.

Aside from troops participating in "Balikatan", the regime will allow other American troops and seacraft to enter and leave the country in the name of "counter-terrorism".

This dovetails with an earlier statement by US Defense Sec. Donald Rumsfeld that American troops would be staying in the country beyond the term limits set for Balikatan 02-1.

In this regard, Pres. George Bush ordered on June 28 the grant of \$10 million worth of military equipment and services allegedly for an "unforeseen emergency that requires immediate military counter-terrorism assistance to the Philippine armed forces".

AFP officials could not determine what constituted the "unforeseen emer-

US rocked by financial scandals

The US economy has been rocked by a never-ending series of financial scandals since the latter part of 2001. They mainly involve accounting anomalies and deception of the public as well as the stockholders of some of the biggest corporations in the US.

The latest in the series of scandals is the case of WorldCom, the second biggest telephone company in the US and the number one internet company worldwide. It was revealed on June 25 that WorldCom had withheld from its stockholders \$3.8 billion in company expenses since the previous year. The amount was misrepresented by company bosses as capital expenditures.

It has now come to light that the company has been incurring heavy losses, contrary to its public image. As a result of the controversy, the price of company shares fell from \$64 to \$0.21. If things come to a head, WorldCom can end up incurring the biggest bankruptcy ever in US history. Even now, 17,000 or about 20% of its workforce worldwide, have been laid off by the company. There are also concerns that WorldCom's collapse could have possible security implications since the telecommunication requirements of strategic government agencies, including the Pentagon and the State Department, all depend on the company.

Aside from WorldCom executives, one of the main culprits is Arthur Andersen, WorldCom's accounting firm during the period in question. Arthur Andersen was also involved in the case of Enron, an energy company and the seventh biggest corporation in the US as well as the 16th largest worldwide before its collapse.

The series of scandals began when it was revealed in October 2001 that Enron executives had been trying to cover up the company's true financial status through fraudulent accounting in order to raise the price of its stocks. The giant corporation went bankrupt and was saddled with debts due to massive and systematic embezzlement by its executives. Recently, Arthur Andersen was convicted of obstruction of justice due to its destruction of documents that would have served as evidence against Enron.

Also implicated in the Enron case is the George W. Bush administration. Company chair Kenneth Lay was known to be close to the president. He was the fourth biggest contributor—pouring in \$623,000—during the Bush presidential campaign. Thirty-five officials of the Bush administration have also been reported to have big shareholdings at Enron, with some having served as consultants to the corporation. In exchange, Enron became influential in drafting the energy policies of the current US government. It is also believed that the White House has had a hand in covering up the anomalies that have transpired at Enron.

WorldCom is the 10th big US corporation to be involved in a financial scandal since the Enron case erupted. The other companies are Tyco, Rite Aid, Merrill Lynch, Waste Management, Cendant, Sunbeam, Global Crossing and Adelphia Communications. The latest cases to be exposed are those of Xerox, Apple Computer and Walt Disney. **AB**

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NPA seizes 16 firearms in Misamis Occidental

The New People's Army (NPA) in Western Mindanao seized 16 high-powered rifles in a raid on a CAFGU detachment on June 30. The successful raid was launched in Sinaad, Sapang Dalaga, Misamis Occidental.

Seized were 13 M14s, two M16s, a Garand and a hand-held radio. The CAFGU elements were unable to put up any resistance when the NPA raided their detachment.

4 soldiers killed, 2 wounded in Bulacan ambush

Four soldiers of the 34th Special Forces Company Riverine were killed and two others were wounded in an ambush by Red fighters along the boundaries of Barangay Binakod and Barangay Sta. Cruz, Paombong, Bulacan on the morning of July 3. The soldiers were patrolling the river when they were ambushed.

The next day, two vehicles of the 305th PNP Provincial Mobile Group were burned by an NPA team in Barangay Panasahan in the neighboring town of Malolos.



Ambush in Surigao victorious

The NPA successfully ambushed a team of policemen along the highway in Barangay Alipao, Alegria, Surigao del Norte in the last week of June. Seized from the ambush was an M14 and a 9 mm pistol. A policeman was killed while another was wounded.

The policemen were on their way back to their station from an operation when the NPA waylaid them at around six o'clock in the evening.

NPA mounts ambush on soldiers in Samar

Elements of the 34th IB were taken by surprise and unable to resist when ambushed by the NPA on June 30 along the boundaries of Barangay Concepcion and Barangay Lawaan in Paranas, Samar. The Red fighters opened fire on six soldiers who were aboard a six-wheeler truck. The troops were on their way back to their headquarters in San Jorge, Samar when ambushed by the NPA at around 12:30 noon. Two of the soldiers were killed while the other four were wounded.

The NPA later demolished the truck using command-detonated land mines.

Punitive actions launched in Negros, Davao Oriental and Tarlac

The Boy Gatmaitan Command (NPA-Negros) claimed responsibility for setting fire to nine passenger buses of Ceres Bus Line from February to June 20. The Ceres buses are owned by Vallacar Transit Inc.

In a statement released on June 21, NPA-Negros spokesperson Bayani Obrero said that the burning of Ceres buses was a punitive measure against the Yanson family that owns Vallacar. He said that the Yanson family had committed many transgressions against the people and the revolutionary movement. Among others, the company refused to pay taxes due to the revolutionary movement; seized lands in Hinobaan, Negros Occidental and Escalante City for use as terminals for the Ceres bus line; deprived its workers of just

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agency". The aid forms part of the MLSA.

Media personnel insulted by American troops

American troops shouted at and cocked their firearms before two media persons on June 17. GMA-7 reporter Jiggy Manicad and cameraman Jun Fronda had requested an interview on the encounter between US troops and the Abu Sayyaf that had just taken place in Isabela City. They were blocked by American soldiers guarding the road inside the 55th IB's headquarters. The soldiers drew and cocked their weapons, sent them away and arrogantly shouted at them that "This is our area!"

Instead of reprimanding the foreign troops for their

arrogance, Southern Command chief Maj. Gen. Ernesto Carolina defended them.

American troops engage in firefight

A number of US and AFP troops figured in a firefight on June 17 with suspected Abu Sayyaf forces. Two US Marines and an AFP soldier were involved in the encounter.

The firefight took place when a group of armed men fired at a team of US Navy Seabees (construction battalion) constructing a road in Maligue, Isabela. The US Navy Seabees are among 500 American soldiers in Basilan setting up infrastructure to facilitate the AFP's movements in the thickly forested island and affecting friendly relations with Basilan residents.

wages and benefits; and refused to honor its obligations to victims of accidents involving Ceres.

Red fighters also set fire to a bus owned by LCI, a transport company, in Sitio Tagamot, Barangay Dawan, Mati, Davao Oriental on June 23. LCI was meted punishment for neglecting accident victims.

In Barangay Mamonit, Mayantoc, Tarlac, an NPA squad torched two cement mixers and a truck worth millions of pesos on June 11 because of owner Francisco Dizon's refusal to abide by the revolutionary movement's policy on taxation.

Planned closure of 10 hospitals in Isabela criticized

NDF Cagayan Valley spokesperson Ka Lorena Magtanggol criticized the planned closure of 10 community hospitals in Isabela. Matanggol said that the province's governor Faustino Dy Jr. prioritized the construction of a flamboyant medical building in Ilagan (capital of Isabela) instead of augmenting the funding of small hospitals servicing more than 270 barrios in remote towns of Isabela. Thus, she said, not only will the poor be deprived of health services, many doctors and health workers are in danger of losing their jobs.

The hospitals set to be closed are the Dinapigue Medicare and Emergency Hospital, Jones Medicare and Community Hospital, San Mariano Medicare and Community Hospital, San Antonio Municipal Hospital, Quirino Medicare and Community Hospital, Quezon Emergency Hospital, San Guillermo Emergency Hospital, Elvin Masigan Municipal Hospital, Faustino Dy Emergency Hospital in Villa Concepcion, Cauayan and the Tumauni District Hospital.

As a result, villagers will be forced to travel for up to more than 30 kilometers before reaching the nearest medical facility.



Regime's puppetry condemned during *Araw ng Kalayaan*

Some 2,000 workers, peasants, women, teachers, youth and other sectors from Metro Manila, Central and Southern Luzon condemned on June 12 the planned deployment of more American troops to the Philippines. Other mass actions were simultaneously launched in major cities around the country. Various organizations assailed the Macapagal-Arroyo regime's sophisticated claims that Balikatan 02-1 was a success. They said that Macapagal-Arroyo made such claims to secure approval for unlimited US military intervention through the RP-US Mutual Logistics Support Agreement.

To portray the Macapagal-Arroyo regime's rabid puppetry, the rallyists paraded an effigy dubbed the "Statue of Puppetry". They also criticized the P10 million- extravagant but hollow celebration by Malacañang of Independence Day.

They likewise condemned the anti-riot police for blocking the rally and arresting seven demonstrators, including four children.

Meanwhile, various organizations in Canada issued a statement calling for the pullout of American troops from the Philippines. They also called for the continuation of the Filipino people's unfinished struggle for independence and democracy.

People vow continued resistance to San Roque Dam Project

Even as Malacañang is in a hurry to finish the San Roque Multipurpose Dam Project (SRMDP), the people of the Cordillera continue and are intensifying their resistance to it.

Groups opposed to the SRMDP said on June 22 that the Malacañang-sponsored dialogue called supposedly to discuss issues related to the project was meaningless. Big Cordillera-based alliances opposed to the project were invited to the dialogue but their grievances were disregarded regarding the termination of the project. Some 800 farmers from Pangasinan and Itogon, Benguet who picketed the entrance of the San Roque Power Corporation (SRPC) were blocked.

The alliances strongly assailed the government's generous funding of the SRMDP despite their repeated appeals to stop the project. On June 22, Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the allotment to the project of a \$20 million (P1 billion) loan she was able to secure during a trip to China. The regime has also been trying to convince the Japan Bank of International Cooperation to release a \$400 million loan (P20 billion) for the SRMDP. Japan has revoked its funding due to opposition from Japanese activists.

The Cordillera People's Alliance stressed related problems that the people would confront with the dam's operation. One of them is paying for the \$40 million poured in by the government to finish the dam. This is in addition to paying back the foreign financiers of the project. Aside from this, electricity rates are sure to rise once the dam contributes an additional 345 megawatts to the National Power Corporation (Napocor). Napocor will be passing on the cost of the additional energy to consumers through the PPA.

Pier workers strike, successful

Some 500 workers led by the Samahan ng mga Manggagawa sa Pantalan paralyzed operations at Pier 2, 4, 6, 12, 14 and 16 at the Manila North Harbor when they struck on June 25. The workers opposed the United Dockhandlers Inc.'s (UDI) decision to deprive them of their mid-year bonus, 13th month pay and other benefits won in their CBA. The UDI yielded and promised to grant P8 million in benefits to some 1,000 workers.



FTI workers' struggle heats up

Workers at the Food Terminal Inc. (FTI) in Taguig, Metro Manila assailed management's continued refusal to come to terms with a just collective bargaining agreement. They said that a prior agreement that included additional benefits offered by management and a P1,800 monthly wage hike had all been revoked by the FTI negotiating panel upon Malacañang's orders. The workers were even threatened that Malacañang would order the closure or privatization of the corporation should the workers continue to assert their demands.

The workers belied management claims that the FTI was in the red. In fact, said the workers, FTI was the only wholly-owned government corporation that was not being subsidized. Instead, it has been a source of funds for past and present regimes.

The workers stressed that if their just demands were not met, their six-month struggle for a CBA would culminate in a strike.



Colonel charged with killing of 2 Bayan Muna members

Murder and frustrated murder charges have been filed against Col. Jovito Palparan, 204th Bde commander; M/Sgt. Larry Hilario, an intelligence operative; Aniano "Silver" Flores and Larry Viena Aparato, both military assets. Gunned down on May 28 were Bayan Muna members Edilberto Napoles and Ruel Landicho. Napoles was killed while Landicho, who was wounded, identified Flores and Aparato as the gunmen. Bayan Muna has accused Palparan and Hilario of masterminding the murder.

Court rejects Mamburao 6 appeal

The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) condemned on June 21 the latest decision by the Quezon

City Regional Trial Court rejecting the appeal for reconsideration filed by the Mamburao 6.

The Mamburao 6 are peasant leaders from Occidental Mindoro who have been accused of killing the sons of despotic landlord Ricardo Quintos in 1999. The NPA has, from the very beginning, claimed responsibility for punishing the Quintoses.

The KMP said that with the court's rejection of the appeal, the peasantry's legitimate struggle for genuine agrarian reform continues to be criminalized.

Task Force Hope launched vs. revolutionary movement

The AFP, PNP and the Commission on Elections launched Task Force Hope on June 29 allegedly to stop the revolutionary movement from influencing the barangay elections. Project Hope's main components include offensive combat and intelligence operations against the revolutionary movement. Branded as "election hot spots" and areas of concentration of military operations are Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog and Bicol.

In a related development, a battalion of Philippine Marines was recently deployed to Camarines Norte and Camarines Sur. Military forces have also been augmented in other areas of the country where the revolutionary movement is strong because "the CPP and NPA are strengthening their grassroots presence and control of the political structures of barangays through the July 15 elections."

Paramilitary forces beefed up in Northern and Central Luzon

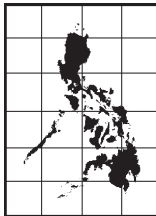
Thirteen companies of the Civilian Armed Auxiliaries (CAA) were formally organized on June 15 under the 5th ID in Northern Luzon and 7th ID in Central Luzon to beef up paramilitary and military forces engaged in counterrevolutionary operations. Five companies were set up in Northern Luzon and eight in Central Luzon. This brings to 72 the overall number of CAA companies deployed in the two regions. The number does not yet include the Cordillera People's Liberation Army which is currently being trained by the AFP for full integration. The AFP made the move in accordance with its view that the revolutionary forces were resurgent in Ilocos, Cordillera, Cagayan and Central Luzon.

KARAPATAN harassed by soldiers, cops

The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) exposed on June 20 the human rights violations committed by troops from Task Force Makiling on members of a fact-finding mission led by KARAPATAN-Batangas. In its statement, the

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KMP said that the fact-finding mission was set to investigate abuses by soldiers and policemen belonging to Task Force Makiling. It said that the women in the mission were harassed and sexually molested by members of the Task Force while the men were mauled and hit with rifle butts. The Task Force guards lands owned by big hacienda owners in Southern Tagalog like the Roxases, Puyats and Lopezes.



Anti-migrant policies pushed by DOLE

DOLE has entered into an agreement with the Saudi Arabian government to reduce the minimum wages of migrant Filipino workers there by 25%. The agreement also prohibits migrant workers from suing their recruiters and employers for breach of contract. The agreement will cover some 400,000 low-skilled Filipino workers in Saudi Arabia. Welfare centers outside of the Philippine embassy were likewise declared illegal. The declaration criminalizes migrant workers with problems for seeking assistance from Migrante and other alternative labor centers.

4.87 M Filipinos jobless

Up to 4.87 million Filipinos were officially acknowledged by the government to be unemployed as of April. The actual number is definitely bigger than what the government-doctored statistics show. This also signifies the Macapagal-Arroyo regime's failure to solve widespread and worsening unemployment in the country. The unemployment rate of 13.9% was the highest in two years. All regions registered high unemployment rates, with Metro Manila at the lead (20.3%). Meanwhile, the National Statistics Office said that among the employed, 5.9 million or 19.6% were underemployed.

NEWS FROM THE STUDENT AND TEACHER FRONT

NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN PRIVATE COLLEGES PLUMMETS. The number of students in private colleges plummeted this school opening due to higher tuition and other fees. At the Adamson University in Manila, the number of students dropped 12%. At the University Belt and Taft in Manila, schools continued to accept enrollees one week after the first day of classes because of a lack of students. Enrolment was also ongoing at AMA till the middle of June even if classes had already started on May 28.

CHED itself has admitted that in 2000, only 42.52% of college enrollees were able to reach fourth year.

"YOUTH FORCED TO WORK INSTEAD OF STUDY"—ANAKBAYAN-NEGROS.

Anakbayan-Negros Oriental said on June 11 that many youth in the province are unable to study because of the high cost of education and worsening poverty. Thus, said Dionmarx Dionson, the organizations' chair, 75% of the province's 300,000 school-age youth are forced to work in the agricultural sector or in construction sites. Dionson also assailed the government for giving more priority to the military's pursuit of the Abu Sayyaf than to education.

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS RALLY. Students and teachers in Baguio, Central Luzon, Bicol, Samar, Panay, Davao City and Metro Manila launched coordinated protest actions on June 17 to oppose the miserable state of education in the country.

The students declared their strong opposition to the new round of tuition fee hikes in so many schools. They likewise criticized CHED as a mere instrument for the commercialization of education and a co-conspirator of the Macapagal-Arroyo regime in depriving the youth of education and social services.

Led by the Alliance of Concerned Teachers, the teachers assailed the Basic Education Curriculum, the severely inadequate education budget and the teachers low salaries.

Bayan Muna Partylist Rep. Liza Masa also led teacher- and student leaders in a "Bisita Eskwela"—or visits to public schools to investigate problems hounding students and teachers.

28 STUDENTS JOIN NPA. Twenty-eight students from various colleges and universities in Metro Manila decided to join the NPA in the first six months of 2002. Twenty-four others decided to work fulltime in the cities.

According to a report from the National Youth and Student Bureau, 40 out of 115 students from these schools who decided to become fulltime revolutionaries the previous year, joined the NPA or were deployed to various other areas of revolutionary work in the countryside. Thirty-six out of 70 students who turned fulltime in 1999 also joined the NPA.

Aside from them, many more students from schools in the provinces have joined the NPA and worked fulltime for the revolution in various regions.

PN trained by British Navy

The HMS Nottingham of the British Royal Navy (BRN) docked at Pier 15 of the Manila South Harbor in mid-June for a five-day training exercise. Aboard the air defense destroyer were 250 BRN troops.

The visit was ostensibly for rest and recreation. But a major part of the activities included the training of Philippine Navy troops assigned to the Malampaya Gas Fields in Palawan on sea combat operations.

“Capitalism will never be restored”—

Cuban parliament

The Cuban National Assembly unanimously voted to enshrine in their constitution the irrevocability of the 41-year-old socialist system in the country. The amendment to the constitution was ratified after a three-day meeting on the matter. During the voting led by Pres. Fidel Castro, everyone who voted strongly shouted “*Si!*” (Yes). After the unanimous vote, the deputies joined hands and sang the Cuban national anthem and the Internationale. Castro declared Cuba’s entry into the socialist system two years after the revolution’s victory in 1959.



Successful general strike launched in Spain

Millions of workers in Spain participated in a 24-hour general strike on June 20. Almost 84% of workers took part in the general strike organized by the two biggest unions in the country. The strike was timed to coincide with the eve of the European Union Summit in Seville and the peak of the tourist season. The strike affected transportation, industry, trade and the civil service.

The strike was the workers’ response to government plans to reform the unemployment benefit system and protest Spain’s economic policies that have caused further unemployment. Spain’s unemployment rate of 11.5% is the highest among the 15 member-nations of the European Union.

This was the first general strike in Spain since Jose Maria Aznar’s rightist government took power in 1996.

10,000 protest in Norway vs. WB

Some 10,000 people trooped to the streets of Oslo, Norway on June 25 to assail the World Bank (WB). The Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics was held in the city. They cried out their strong condemnation of world capitalism’s various faces, from US imperialism to Israel’s attacks on Palestine.

Demonstration confronts G8 meet

Thousands of people protested the meeting held by the Group of 8 (composed of the US, Japan, France, Great

Britain, Germany, Canada, Italy and Russia) in Calgary, Alberta and Ottawa, Canada on June 27. They shouted various anti-imperialist slogans that assailed imperialism’s political, economic and cultural intervention in different countries in the world. Prior to this, demonstrations confronted the Finance Ministerial Meetings of the Group of 7 (minus Russia) in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Privatization in Peru opposed

The people of Lima, Peru launched a week-long rally from June 13 to oppose the Toledo regime’s plans to sell Egasa and Egesur, the two major electric companies in the country. The protesters said that the planned privatization would lead to widespread layoffs and hikes in electricity rates. Because of the protests, the Peruvian government was forced to temporarily suspend the plan.

US threats against Arafat criticized

US Pres. George Bush’s counterparts during the G8 meeting took exception to his threats of withdrawing aid and support for Palestine should Yasser Arafat remain as the country’s leader. The leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Japan and Russia insisted that the Palestinian people had the right to choose their leaders through an election. Meanwhile, Israeli troops continued to occupy seven cities in the West Bank and launch sporadic and repeated attacks on them. They have imposed a curfew on the Palestinian people. On June 29, the Israeli army detonated explosive charges to demolish the Palestinian police headquarters.

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